

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 OES-06 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2442

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, ICRC, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

REF: STATE 25522

1. SUMMARY. THE SOVIET SIDE HONORED THE US DELEGATION TO THE SUBJECT CONSULTATIONS AS THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL USG DELEGATION TO VISIT MOSCOW SINCE THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE FORMAL TALKS WAS CORDIAL, AND OUTSIDE THE TALKS THE SOVIETS WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO BE HOSPITABLE. ISSUES OF DIFFERENCE WERE MUTED, AND THE SOVIET DID NOT COMPLAIN ONCE ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE DEPARTMENT' ACTING LEGAL ADVISOR GEORGE ALDRICH HEADED A FIVE-MAN US DELEGATION FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS CONCERNING THE DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW WHICH IS DUE TO RESUME IN GENEVA IN MARCH. THE FORMAL TALKS TOOK PLACE ON FEBRUARY 18 WITH A SEVEN-MAN SOVIET DELEGATION HEADED BY THE CHIEF SOVIET DELEGATE TO THE CONFERENCE, AMBASSADOR GRIBANOV. THE TALKS, WHICH IN SUBSTANCE CONCERN THE LAWS OF WAR, PROCEEDED WITH VIRTUALLY NO
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CONTENTION AND WITH A REMARKABLE SIMILARITY OF VIEWS ON THE MAIN ISSUES. AT ONE POINT, AMBASSADOR GRIBANOV CHARACTERIZED THE TWO SIDES' POSITIONS AS "CLOSE OR COINCIDING" AND HE AND ALDRICH AGREED BOTH THAT REMAINING DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH SHOULD BE BRIDGEABLE -- AT LEAST BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR AND THAT THE COMING SESSION SHOULD BE THE LAST.

3. AS IMPORTANT AS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE TALKS WAS THE ATMOSPHERE OUTSIDE THE FORMAL EXCHANGES. THE CHIEFS OF THE SOVIET MFA'S TREATY AND LEGAL DIVISION, OLEG KHLESTOV, HOSTED AN ELEGANT LUNCHEON AT WHICH HE AND GIRBANOV EXCHANGED TOASTS WITH ALDRICH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BETTER SOVIET-US RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY APPRECIATED THE US DELEGATION'S WILLINGNESS TO COME TO MOSCOW, DESPITE THE INCONVENIENCE OF REARRANGING ITS SCHEDULE TO DO SO. THE SOVIETS ALSO STRESSED THAT THEY WELCOMED THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS AS THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL USG DELEGATION SINCE THE INAUGURATION OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. AND THEY SPECIFICALLY LOOKED FORWARD OPTIMISTICALLY TO SECRETARY VANCE'S VISIT TO MOSCOW NEXT MONTH. NONE OF THE SOVIETS ALLUDED PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY TO RECENT CARTER ADMINISTRATION STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES.

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Message Attributes

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